

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Praising the efforts of the nation's victims' rights movement Congressman Jim Costa, D- Fresno, today took the Bush Administration to task for what he called its, "wrongheaded attempt to balance the budget on the backs of victims."

In a statement delivered on the House Floor, Costa, one of the founders of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, criticized the administration for retracting a program that was first developed under President Ronald Reagan. President Reagan led the fight for passage of the Victims of Crime Act in 1984, which created the Crime Victims' Fund. Fines levied on criminals provide the money for the Crime Victims' Fund. Reiterating that these funds are "not taxpayer dollars," Costa pointed out that the Fund gives monetary aid "to service providers who assist millions of crime victims annually."

The Fresno lawmaker declared that, "We must ensure the Crime Victims' Fund is used for what President Reagan intended - to help victims who truly need and deserve assistance and to hold offenders accountable."

The 2006 National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme is "Victims' Rights: Strength in Unity." The week is celebrated with ceremonies and observances in Washington, D.C. and in hundreds of communities across the nation.

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